



## Shawnee Successes

### Quarterly Newsletter



**A quarterly newsletter for employees and friends of the Shawnee National Forest**

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *Shawnee Successes*! Yep, it's spring here at the Shawnee National Forest (NF), and just as the warmer weather ushers in all things new in the natural world, the Public Affairs team thought it might be neat to develop a new communication tool for you, the public we serve.

This first edition is also an opportunity for us to say thank you to everyone for your calls, messages and overall support during the recent tornado that devastated parts of Harrisburg on February 29<sup>th</sup>. For our team here on the Forest, the damage sustained went far beyond our Supervisor's Office (SO) but extended into all of our hearts as we mourned the loss of one of our most gracious team members, Donna Rann. Many of you probably remember talking with Donna when coming to the SO and/or calling in as she was never without a smile or a friendly word. So many of us here remember her always answering "Blessed" whenever one asked her how she was, and in looking back on our memories of Donna, we are incredibly blessed to have had her as a part of our U.S. Forest Service team. And so, in tribute to and in remembrance of, we dedicate this first issue of *Shawnee Successes* to Donna and her husband, Randy.

So what will you find in *Shawnee Successes*? Each edition will cover projects, programs, outreach events and other news friendly items that happened on the Forest. Publication will be quarterly as well, so this edition will cover activities for the months of January 2012 – March 2012. As communication with those we serve is a top priority for us, I hope that you'll enjoy learning more about the great work being done on the Forest. So, pull up a chair, kick back and read away as we're excited to share our successes with you!

Many thanks and all the best,

*Amanda G. Patrick*  
*Public Affairs Officer*



*Area businesses, organizations and agencies gathered around Harrisburg, IL to take photos in support of the city's rebuilding process. Pictures were gathered and placed on the city's Facebook page, showing the spirit of the town as people, including those at the Shawnee National Forest, move forward.*

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*New picnic shelter at Lincoln Memorial Recreation Area*

## Connecting with the Public!

*Education, Interpretation and  
Conservation Education...*

The Forest's Education and Interpretation Program has delivered a total of six education and interpretation programs to over 600 students and members of the public from various counties in the southern Illinois area since the start of 2013, marking a successful beginning to the new year ahead for outreach efforts!

One particular success was held in celebration of African American History Month during the month of February as two AmeriCorps VISTAs, working with the Shawnee National Forest and University of Illinois Extension Service, organized a heritage celebration and art program with students at Cairo Elementary School. The two-day event took place on February 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> at Cairo Elementary and included students from 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade.



*L: Students listen to a presentation by retired Shawnee National Forest team member, Marlene Rivero, as she portrays Harriet Tubman during a recent program at Cairo Elementary School.*

*R: It's all hands in as Forest Archaeologist Mary McCorvie works with participants to design a quilt block. The activity helped students to utilize their artistic skills to create a tapestry that reflected their own culture and heritage.*

## What's New for the Visitor?

*Learn more about how the Shawnee is working to improve facilities and programs to ensure a quality experience for those we serve!*

- A Recovery Act project focused on making improvements to the Lincoln Memorial Recreation Area was completed in early 2012. The work reflects the rustic architectural design of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1937, who originally rebuilt the recreation area from the remains of the Union County Fairgrounds. With the cultural and natural heritage highlighted, the Forest Service project includes the improvement of a walking path, the installation of a play area, and the rehabilitation of a fishing area; all designed to offer the local community access to outdoor activities that encourage a healthy lifestyle. Other site improvements that will promote visitors to "get outdoors" and connect with nature include the reconstruction of two picnic shelters and a comfort station, both of which reflect the rustic stone and timber CCC heritage of the site.

- Tree removal at Pounds Hollow Recreation Area has been completed in preparation for the addition of electricity to sites in Loop 3 of the campground. Students from the Golconda Job Corps Center will be assisting with completion of the electrical work.

- Forest recreation technicians accomplished substantial maintenance improvements at the following sites: Lincoln Memorial Recreation Area; Lake Glendale Recreation Area beach and picnic sites; and the day use area and campground at Johnson Creek Recreation Area.

## Thinking "Green" on the Shawnee National Forest

With recycling, climate change and all things sustainable ever at the forefront, the Shawnee National Forest's (NF) Green Team is working hard to look, inspire and empower others to think "green" through innovative projects, programs and engaging educational activities. Comprised of ten team members from across the Forest, the team has planned and implemented several new programs, including a "Trash Can Take Down," which has employees thinking twice before tossing something recyclable via trash can audits with a recycling theme. Employees are also at working to think creatively through a Repurpose Challenge; a chance to take items that might normally be sent to the nearest land field but instead are made into neat, reusable items. For those employees who exemplify above and beyond green thinking, a new "Green Employee of the Month" recognition is in the works too, and Shawnee NF Green Team members are also at work to lead presentations at monthly safety meetings on climate change, recycling and other sustainable topics. Monthly green tips are sent out as well, all adding to the premise that thinking green is not just good for the environment - It's also good for the budget AND can be fun!



## Natural Places and Spaces...



- The Shawnee National Forest (NF) was recently awarded \$99,320 in Land and Water Conservation Fund Critical Inholding Funds to purchase a 38.2 acre of ecologically significant land in Pope County. The property contains important habitat for several imperiled bat species, numerous karst features and frontage alongside Big Grand Pierre Creek, a candidate Wild and Scenic River.
- The wildlife program completed eight miles of stream habitat improvement and 30 acres of lake/pond habitat improvement across the Forest.
- Seasonal wildlife crew utilized heavy equipment to construct a levee and install a water control structure in an existing drainage ditch, effectively restoring the hydrology, improving soil conditions and restoring the ephemeral wetland functions to the area and resulting in the creation of a 90 acre wetland impoundment.
- The Forest continued its partnership work with Ducks Unlimited, joining forces to complete 560 acres of wetland restoration and improvement in the Big Muddy River floodplain.

**Congratulations to Volunteer and Trails Coordinator Kelly Pearson on her selection as the 2011 National Volunteer Program Award winner!**



*Participants in the "Major Loser Challenge" stop to celebrate a successful day!*

### **SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST COORDINATES WITH GOLCONDA JOB CORPS TO HELP STUDENTS GET HEALTHIER!**

The beginning of becoming healthier starts when an individual decides to be committed to a healthier lifestyle, and that's exactly what 36 Job Corps students did when they joined the Major Loser Challenge Program. Kicking off on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the program's main objective is to educate and motivate the Golconda Job Corps students to maintain a long, healthy life style, physically and mentally, while also helping them to achieve personal development. Shawnee National Forest (NF) GIS Coordinator Kris Twardowski helped to plan and implement the outreach endeavor along with husband Chuck, who serves as the Job Corps Center's Recreation Specialist and Guy Brown, Cafeteria Supervisor. Kris, who is also the Health and Wellness Coordinator for the Forest, has been incredibly excited and inspired to be a part of the program, being a firm believer in the empowerment that comes from feeling good and being at optimum health. "This program has been so amazing," said Kris. "To see these students work hard and put so much effort into being their best has been a joy, and I am heartened by the good things accomplished and am honored to have been a part of the program." Kris's dedication to helping the program be a success is showing results; as 30 to 35 students have participated to date across a 4 week period with 150.3 pounds being lost collectively. The program is free and open to all, and even though the program is 4 weeks in, students may register at any time to take part.

**The Shawnee National Forest wishes you and yours a safe and enjoyable visit to the Forest! Remember to recreate safely while out and about on Shawnee NF land as your safety is our concern.**





## GET INVOLVED! – BECOME A MEMBER OF THE SHAWNEE VOLUNTEER CORPS!

The Forest's Volunteer Program continues to do well with the start of 2012 as volunteer efforts have resulted in a total of 1,467 hours being donated towards projects and programs. Additionally, 170 volunteer agreements have been administered and 12 trailhead/recreation area adoption agreements established. Groups that have volunteered on the Shawnee National Forest (NF) include alternative spring break college students from Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania.

Whether you're a student interested in gaining hands on, real world experience to help you build your resume and expand your career interests or you're a person seeking to learn more about the Shawnee NF through engaging work, volunteer opportunities abound on the Forest! With recreation, archaeology, public affairs, conservation education, interpretation and more, there is something for everyone!

To learn more about becoming involved, please contact Kelly Pearson, Volunteer and Trails Coordinator, at 618-833-8576 (ext. 103) or e-mail: [kdpearson@fs.fed.us](mailto:kdpearson@fs.fed.us)

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To:

*Take Note! - Look for future quarterly editions of Shawnee Successes to be found online via the Shawnee National Forest website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/shawnee>*

**Did You Know???** → The Shawnee National Forest (NF) made significant strides in climate change efforts through more strategic and efficient fleet management. From 2008 to 2011, the Forest was successful in reducing its carbon footprint by 110 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> solely through responsible fleet administration. This occurred by reducing the number of vehicles on the Forest and by replacing larger vehicles with smaller, more efficient vehicles, whenever possible. The Shawnee NF is both excited and immensely proud of the accomplishment and an additional 10 tons is anticipated to be reduced further by 2015.